13

The Penitent Recognition of Joseph's *Brethren:*

A

SERMON

Occasion'd by

Elizabeth Ridgeway.

Who for the Petit Treason of

POYSONING HER HUSBAND,

Was, on *March* 24. 168¾. according to the *Sentence of the Right Honourable* Sir Thomas Street, one of His Majesties Judges of Assize for the Midland Circuit, *Burnt at Leicester:* When and where were also Executed *William Tannesly* and *Edward Orton*, for *Burglary*; Sons of one Woman.

To which is prefixed *a full Relation of the Womans Fact, Tryal, Carriage, and Death.*

By *John Newton*, A. M. Sometime *Fellow of Clare-Hall, Cambridge*, and now *Vicar of St. Martins, Leicester.*

Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri.

LONDON,

Printed for *Richard Chiswel*, at the *Rose* and *Crown* in St. *Paul's Church-yard.* 1684.

To the Right Worſhipful ANDREW FREEMAN, Eſq; MAYOR of the Burrough of LEICESTER.

SIR,

I *Should ſcarce have appeared an Author of* ſuch an Expreſs from *Leiceſter, as I now ſend abroad in a ſtile too near of kin to that of* the Monthly News from the Old-Baily, *had not the* Earneſt Requeſt of Your Worthy Self, *and of many* other Good Men, *oblig'd me thereto.*

The Subject, however remarkable, *goes* low; *nor can the ſtreams, by ſo mean an Artiſt as my ſelf, be raiſed above the Fountain Head. But if any ſhall draw benefit therefrom, it will eaſe me of all regret, as having expoſed my obſcure Name, in the obſervance of Your Commands,* by whom, in this Your Second Mayoralty, under God and the King, we enjoy great Quietneſs, and by whoſe Providence, very worthy Deeds are done unto our

our Corporation. *To which, both in its Head and Members, (as for* above Twenty Years already paſt, *I have been highly Obliged) I ſhall ſtudy always to approve my ſelf*

A very Faithful

Humble Servant

whilſt

J. NEWTON.

A True

A TRUE

RELATION

OF THE

FACT, TRIAL, CARRIAGE and DEATH

OF

Elizabeth Ridgeway.

ELizabeth, the late *Wife of the late Thomas Ridgeway*, was born at *Ibſtock* in the County of *Leiceſter*, and there educated in the knowledge of the ordinary Duties of Chriſtianity, ſo far as concern a Woman in *her* ſtation. Being arrived at Maturity, ſhe was, at the inſtigation, and through the practices of a pragmatical *Fellow ſervant*, utterly againſt her Father's declared Will (*He forbidding the Banns*) married to the above-named *Thomas Ridgeway of Ibſtock, Tailor*. They were married (if I miſtake not) on *Friday, Febr.* 1. 168¼. Thenceforward they lived together in all ſeeming mutual Love, without the leaſt

jarr, until the *Sunday three weeks after.* On that *Sunday morning* Tho. Ridgeway went to Church, and his Wife ſtaid at home to prepare Dinner. At his *coming home* ſhe gave him a *Diſh of Broth*; of which he ate the greater quantity, but left part; there being ſeen in it *ſomething like to Gritt or Lime.* In leſs than half an hour he was taken with a *violent vomiting and purging*, and held therewith 'till *paſt midnight*; when in great torment he *died*, not ſuſpecting (*as is ſaid*) any thing of Poyſon.

A day or two after he had been buried, an *Apprentice* of his, about Sixteen years of Age, declared to his Maſters Relations, that, he *feared his Maſter was poyſon'd*, becauſe of that *ſtuff, that was ſeen in the bottom of his diſh*, which his Wife took from him, and convey'd away. This Information being taken by a *Juſtice of Peace*, a Gentleman of great *Judgment* and *Prudence*, an Inqueſt was ordered by him to be taken by the *Coroner:* Upon whoſe Inqueſt the Wife was found *Guilty of Poyſoning her Husband*, and by the *Coroner's Mittimus* ſent to the Gaol at *Leiceſter.*

On *Friday, March* 14. She was by the *Grand Jury* put upon her Trial before my *Lord Judge Street.* Upon her Arraignment ſhe pleaded *Not Guilty*, and put her ſelf upon her Countrey for her Trial. Upon a Full Hearing, ſhe was at firſt by *Eight thought Guilty*, and after ſome Debate *found Guilty by the whole Twelve*, and according to the Verdict *Sentence paſt.*

The Proof depending principally upon the Teſtimony of a *Youth of Sixteen years old*, and ſhe all along pro-

proteſting her *Innocency*, ſome tender People were willing to hope favourably of her; whereupon ſome Applications were made on *Saturday morning* for ſome Reſpite, or a Reprieve. But his Lordſhip having by his great *Sagacity* clearly diſcerned, how *well* his Sentence was grounded, and how *neceſſary* it was, it ſhould be executed, according to his ſignal *Wiſdom and Juſtice*, rejected all ſuch Addreſſes, leaving her to the *Mercy of God*, and the *Care of her Friends*; and particularly recommending of her to *my poor Advice and Prayers*.

Not to ſtand to give you any account of the Prayers preferred to God by my ſelf and others, publickly and privately, for and with her, I ſhall proceed to relate the *Occurrences of each day*, from her *Condemnation*, to her *Execution*.

On *Friday night* ſhe only aſſerted her *Innocence*, and begg'd, that Application might be made for her *Reprieve*.

On *Saturday evening* I, viſiting of her, enquir'd of her Guilt, but ſhe aſſerted her Innocence. I deſired her thereupon to recollect, whether ſhe had not committed *ſome other heinous Offence of the like or ſome other nature*, for which God might be provoked to ſuffer ſuch a grievous unuſual Calamity to befall her. At that ſhe ſighed, and ſaid, *Ay, There it is, There's the cauſe of my Woe*; or words of the like Import: And ſo upon fair Inducements, ſhe proceeded to acknowledge, that ſhe feared ſhe was too far concerned in the *Death of another Man*; which (as ſhe then freely related) came to paſs as followeth.

Having left her Father's Houſe, and betaken her ſelf to a Service in the Town, and her Maſter being often from home, ſeveral young Men frequented the Houſe, with whom ſhe was wont to diſcourſe of *Love* and *Marriage*; profeſſing often more Love to any of them all, than was at any one time meet to pretend to *any more than one.* One above the reſt ſhe for ſeveral Months entertain'd, not only with fair *expreſſions of Affection*, but alſo with *promiſes of Marriage.* After all, on a ſudden, ſhe *utterly rejects him*, without any juſt cauſe aſſign'd. Not long after, he on the Friday falls into a *violent Diſtemper*, whereof (after he had ſent importunate Entreaties for a *Viſit* from her, which ſhe *utterly deny'd*) the next Week he dies. Now, although there was then nothing of *foul Practice* ſuſpected, yet, upon *recollection*, it is well remembred, that he, in his *laſt illneſs, fared very ſtrangely.* That upon his ſudden Fall his blood ſetled (as they apprehended) and turned black, he burned intolerably, all eaſe of Nature was utterly obſtructed, his Stomach was violently gnawed: But, above all, he all along complained of the *laſt draught of Beer he drank* (after his coming from out of the Field) in his Maſters houſe; where, *that day*, (as *his Wife* a little before her death affirmed) *Thomas Ridgeway aforeſaid was at work:* And here, by the way, it is ſomething *remarkable*, that ſhe ſhould *ſo early obſerve*, and *ſo lately remember*, that her Husband wrought *the ſame day in the ſame houſe*, wherein the other Perſon fell ſo ſuddenly and ſo violently into a mortal Diſeaſe.

She further told me, that juſt before her Husband *breathed his laſt*, he, in horror, cry'd out, *That God's hand was juſt upon him, for the wrong he had done to that.*

that perſon ſo deceaſed; for as much as having had time afforded him to repent of it, he neglected to improve it, and now being juſt dying he could not repent. I asked her what the *wrong* was: She anſwered that ſhe had no time to enquire of him particularly *what it was.* I asked her whether ſhe had not at any time heard *Tho. Ridgeway threaten the Perſon deceaſed?* She anſwered no; nor was ſhe at all privy to any violence practiſed or intended: Yet ſhe ſaid that ſhe feared *Thomas Ridgeway* had played *ſome foul play*, and that ſhe *her ſelf was to blame*; and that ſhe had been often *haunted, both waking and ſleeping, with frightful apprehenſions of the appearing of the deceaſed Perſon to her.* All this while I could draw no more from her, touching any murderous deſign or attempt, than that ſhe ſuſpected her *falſe and cruel carriage* towards him, might occaſion his Sickneſs and death.

I then inquired of her, *Who the deceaſed Perſon was?* She refuſed to tell me either his *Name* or *Place of Living*, or *Time of Dying*; and all, leſt the noiſe of ſuch a diſcovery, ſhould revive much grief to his Relations; which I told her might eaſily be prevented. At laſt ſhe told me, that *his Mother lived at a Neighbouring Town called* Norton: I gave her my ſence of all, and left her.

On *Sunday*, as ſhe came from Church in the morning, I examined her again ſtrictly and ſeriouſly; but ſhe advanced *not one ſtep.* Within two hours, after ſhe had denyed all knowledg of any evil will of *Thomas Ridgeway* againſt the *Perſon deceas'd*, a Brother and a Siſter of hers came to my Houſe, and told me, that ſhe freely *confeſſed to them*, that *Thomas Ridgeway* had long and often threatned the Perſon deceaſed with Revenge,

Revenge, and *Cutting of him off:* That for a time she endeavoured to dissuade him; but at last permitted him by saying these words, [*Do what you will with him.*] I inquired the *Name of the Person:* They said, they knew it not: I told 'em, *His Mother liv'd at* Norton: They answered, it must certainly be one *John King* who had liv'd in their Town, and died about *Midsummer last.* Whereupon I apprehended that her Brother and Sister became very *suspicious* of some heinous guilt of them both: I mean both of *her Husband and her self.*

At night, I questioning of her of what hath past, received this short and reserved answer: *I suppose my Brother hath told you all.* I asked her what she said to *Thomas Ridgeway*, when he first came to her with professions of Love, *after the death of* John King. She said, she used these words: *So, have you not now made good your threatning words against* John King? I here set my self to display and aggravate the black crimes of *Thomas Ridgeway* and her self. She answered me after this canting manner, *Truly I dare not judge my Husband for any thing further than for some rash and harsh words; nor my self, for intending any hurt by speaking the forementioned words of consent.*

Hereupon I left her, not without *astonishment*, that she should go so far towards the Confession of a *bloody Fact*, the guilt whereof I could render her no further sensible of.

On *Monday morning*, having considered what a reserved, stupid, uncertain, yea, and *false Creature* I had to deal with, I set down in writing the most material passages, which she with *her own mouth* had related to me; and those, in the hearing of divers grave Persons,

I distinctly *read, and questioned her upon.* She could not deny any word that I charged her withal. The *Fact* all along she acknowledged, but still, as before, the *Guilt* she denyed.

On *Tuesday*, *Wednesday* and *Thursday*, she persisted much in the same posture.

On *Friday*, a Neighbour of hers charged her home with *buying two penniworth of* white Arsenick *on the* Saturday *sevennight after She was married, at* Ashby-de-la-Zouch. After a while she *acknowledged it*, but could not assign any *use* she made of it. The Person acquainting me with this, I *that Evening* went to her, and applyed my self very severely to her for *denying so long her buying any Poyson*; and concluded she had *given it to her Husband.* She would not *expresly confess the buying of the Poyson*, or that she had *before confessed it to her Neighbour*; nor yet, upon my charging of her so peremptorily, did she *deny either buying or such using of the Poyson.*

I thereupon took leave of her, with a purpose to *see her no more*, until finding her self in a better mind, she should send for me: And so I *told her.*

All this obstinacy and reservedness amazed me, and put me upon guessing at the *cause thereof*; which I could not determine to be mere *Blindness and Senselessness*, because she otherways appeared sufficiently Apprehensive and Knowing. I was not willing to impute her shyness to an *utter aversion to my Cloth and way*; because she had declared her self indifferently inclined to the *Church* and *Private Meetings.* Sometimes I thought her silence proceeded from an unwillingness to imprint the mark of her Infamy upon her the deeper by her *own Confession*, whether she believed she was to

Die,

Die, or whether she hoped for any fruit of the endeavours of some for a *Reprieve*. She did indeed declare a tenderness she had for the *Credit of a Party*, amongst whom she had been bred and convers'd: But I endeavoured to assure her, that the Reputation of any Party was much better provided for by the *humble Confession*, than by the *obstinate denyal* of any Criminal Member of the same; and that it argued an intolerable *Pride* in her, to think that the Credit of any Party depended upon any *such obscure and vile wretch as her self*. But if, after all, there were any Person, or Persons, that *advised her to any concealment of the Guilt of her self or any other*, so derogatory to the Honour of *Publick Justice*, and so pernicious to *her Soul*; let such (*if any there be*) repent effectually in time, lest, at the last Judgment, they find more Blood to answer for, than yet they think of. But to return to the *Story*.

On *Saturday*, to a very *considerable Person*, she began to acknowledge *some concern she had had in the Death of her Husband*; and she desired him to acquaint me, that she was very sorry she had *dealt so unfaithfully with me*; and to intreat me I would make her *another visit*, that she might discover the *whole Truth* to me.

When I came to her, she told me that she had indeed *bought Poyson at* a *Shop in* Ashby, *in the presence of one Widow* Brooks, who wrapt it up, (and who hath this, at least, to answer for, that she *appeared not to give Evidence for God and the King against the Criminal.*) She *added*, that she had not made *any use of the said Poyson*, but that it then yet lay upon a Bed in her Fathers House. She further *added*, that there was a *man*, who, both before and after her Marriage, did sollicit her very much for her Love; and who, to make way

to

to his ends, came on *Sunday* in *Church-time* to her houſe; and having put *ſome poyſon into a diſh*, ſlipt away; that ſhe *wittingly, at her Husbands return home, put Broth to the Poyſon, and gave it to her Husband to his deſtruction:* That ſhe had ſeen the face of this man that day in the next Room to her; that I ſhould *ſee him at her Execution*, for his Countenance would bewray his Guilt: That he had lived at *Ibſtock*, and now lives with a Gentleman at *Hinckly*. His Name ſhe would by no means declare, as being *under a Vow or Oath to the contrary.* I diſcovered to her the *wickedneſs of ſuch an Oath*, and that it could no ways bind her to ſuch an *Helliſh Concealment.* When I had ſaid all I could, I was conſtrained to leave her, without any further ſatisfaction touching *this pretended Perſon.*

On *Sunday*, ſhe, with the *other Condemned Perſons* was again brought to Church Morning and Evening: After *Evening Sermon*, ſhe declared to a Gentlewoman, that whereas before ſhe was reſolved, that *all the world ſhould not have perſwaded her to confeſs the very truth*; She, upon hearing the *Sermon* (the ſubſtance whereof is hereto annexed) declared an inviolable purpoſe to be *free and ſincere in her Confeſſion to me.* I went up to her Chamber, and yet found her not ſo forward to ſuch Confeſſion: *Soon after*, her Father and the Gentlewoman, who had heard her make the Promiſe, went up to *challenge her therewith.* She, *laughing in their Faces*, told them, that *All ſhe had ſaid touching the man of* Hinckly, *was a mere fiction*; and that there was *no ſuch man in being*; but that ſhe *her ſelf alone, and without the confederacy or privity of any other creature, had poyſoned her Husband.* Nor did ſhe expreſs any deſire of ſeeing me that Night, as I could then hear.

I began to ſuſpect ſhe was *diſtracted*, and ſo went home: And I ſhould have continued under *that ſuſpicion*, but that at her requeſt ſent firſt by her *Brother* and afterwards by her *Father*, I coming to her *ſome hours before Execution*, found her in a temper that ſpoke *no ſuch diſorder of mind:* For ſhe then in contemplation of approaching Death and Judgment, did *with many tears confirm her laſt Confeſſion.* She *further told us*, that *three years before*, *upon ſome diſcontent*, *ſhe had bought other poyſon with a purpoſe to make away her ſelf:* which happening *about the time of her mothers death*, occaſions ſome ſurmiſes touching the ſame; as alſo ſome whiſpers of the death of *another young man*, *and two little Children.*

As to the *laſt Poyſon*, ſhe ſaid ſhe bought it for *her ſelf* being fruſtrated of her *expectations in her marriage:* For ſhe could not *love her Husband as ſhe ought*; and took further prejudice againſt him, becauſe of *a debt of twenty pounds*, which his Siſter demanded of him ſoon after his marriage, and which was as much as ever he had pretended to be worth. But, *above a week before her Husbands death*, *ſhe converted her deſpair into revenge*, and ſo took the firſt opportunity for *ſending of him out of the world.* This ſhe *conſtantly aſſerted with ſeeming remorſe and ſorrow until her very death*; which ſhe underwent without much apparent conſternation, and yet with much ſeeming contrition.

☞ And *this laſt declaration ſhe did earneſtly intreat me to make known as the real Truth*, for the preventing all *falſe reports* that might be further raiſed, and for the *rectifying of all miſtakes*, which by means of her ſelf or others, had been already ſpread abroad.

If the real *importunity of divers of my worthy Friends*, had

had not after a ſort inforced the Publication of this confuſed tedious ſtory, the very *requeſt of the dying Criminal*, being ſo well grounded, might have induced me thereto; eſpecially when thereby I do but conſult *my own eaſe*: For now I can refer many to this Print, who would otherwiſe be exacting frequent relations of the matter of me by word or writing.

I know that to ſome *inconſiderate Perſons*, the Story may appear leſs agreeable for the *Lamentable Form*, as well as *Matter* of it; it containing divers *uncertainties*, and *contradictions about horrid Poyſoning*. Nevertheleſs, through the uſe of ordinary diſcretion, *out of ſuch malignant Poyſon much ſoveraign Medicine may be compounded*: To give you a *few Inſtances amongſt many*, that your own Reaſon may collect: — Hence,

1. His *Majeſties Juſtice is vindicated from the imputation of Partiality*, which ſome have wickedly endeavoured to fix thereupon, by ſuggeſting that the woman was dealt the more harſhly with, for her *ſuppoſed private Opinion or Inclination*.

2. If Virtue and Goodneſs be not always the Reſults of a *careful Education*, how may we dread the wickedneſs of our Children, that may enſue upon our *utter neglect*, or *evil example*?

3. The *Parents*, who are openly repayed in the *diſobedience of a Child*, ſhould do well, humbly to reflect upon the provocation they may have given to God, and the encouragement they have occaſioned to their Child, by any viſible oppoſition they have made to the *Sovereign Father of their Country*, or by any manifeſt diſregard they have any ways ſhewed to their *Spiritual Mother the Church*.

4. If the *Sentiments of Religion formed in Youth be*

once ſubdued or ſuppreſſed, no wonder if the *blackeſt of wickedneſſes* draw on one another: Such as *Diſobedience to Parents, Diſſimulation with all men, Treachery and Cruelty to Neighbours and Lovers, Bloody and Treaſonous Practices againſt Parents and Husbands.*

5. An Hypocrite, that will not ſtick at the *Commiſſion of the blackeſt crimes, at the check of Conſcience,* will ſometimes refuſe to *acknowledge the ſame for the Credit of a Party.*

6. *The words of condemned Criminals are not to be raſhly believed,* eſpecially, *where Concealment is founded upon a miſtaken religious conſideration:* And this may reach beyond the preſent Subject to many, that have ſuffered condign puniſhment for their Treaſons for *theſe five years laſt paſt.*

7. There want not *ſome Perſons of all perſwaſions,* who perfectly *abhor, and heartily endeavour the diſcovery of all wickedneſs in their own Adherents and Relations.*

8. All *young People are warned,*

Againſt all *forſaking their Parents and Guides of their Youth,* and *leaning to their own underſtanding,* and *gratifying their own ſenſual and vain Inclination,* eſpecially in affairs of *Marriage.*

Againſt all wicked *affectation of firſt Captivating,* and then *Rejecting the Affections of others.*

Againſt all making of *raſh and unwarrantable Promiſes of Marriage,* as without *Leave,* ſo without *Love.*

Againſt all *unjuſt breaking of ſuch Promiſes* when they are once made, and may in time be lawfully performed.

Laſtly, Some Perſons are *prodigiouſly hardened through the deceitfulneſs of Sin.* Their iniquity becomes an unſearchable myſtery to themſelves and others. Their Heart becomes *deceitful above meaſure, and deſperately wicked; who can know it?*

Some *further uſeful remarks* apposite to the preſent

A

SERMON

UPON THE

PENITENT RECOGNITION

OF

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN.

GEN. xlii. 21.

" *And they ſaid one to another, We are verily*
" *guilty concerning our Brother, in that we ſaw*
" *the anguiſh of his Soul, when he beſought*
" *us, and we would not hear. Therefore is*
" *this diſtreſs come upon us.*

JOſeph's Brethren having conceived an inveterate *Envy* and *Hatred* againſt him, as they ſaw him drawing near to them upon a kind Viſit, conſpired his death: but, upon the mediation of *Judah*, they ſpared his life, and ſold him to the *Iſhmaelites*...

maelites. By them he is ſold to *Potiphar* in *Egypt*; where, after various Rencounters, he is exalted to great Power, and in ſpecial to the Truſt and Diſpoſal of the *Stores of Corn in a time of great Dearth.* His Brethren, afrer many years, being compelled by Famine, go down into *Egypt* to buy Corn, and there are brought before their Brother *Joſeph*; who forthwith knew them, but for a ſeaſon remained unknown to them. He pretends to ſuſpect 'em for *Spies*, queſtions 'em touching their Family and Relations, requires 'em to fetch their little Brother *Benjamin* for their Purgation; and orders firſt *all of 'em but one*, and afterwards *one out of 'em all* to remain in Priſon by way of Pledge or Hoſtage, until they ſhould have brought little *Benjamin* into his preſence. They, being reduced to ſuch a *grievous ſtrait*, begin to make *ſad reflections* upon what might provoke God to caſt them into ſuch woful diſtreſs. They are not long to ſeek, nor do they at all differ about the *Cauſe.* It muſt needs be *their harſh and cruel uſage of their Brother*, the reſentment whereof they ſeem *unanimouſly* to acknowledge in the *words of my Text*——where they *ſaid one to another*, *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother*, &c.

The words ſpeak { 1. Their *Guilt concerning their Brother.* 2. Their *Deportment under it.*

I. Of *their Guilt.*

Take a Particular of this in *Chap.* 37. there you have the *Riſe and Progreſs of it.*

It commenced in *Envy and evil will*, ver. 11. ſo long as

as men enjoy the love and favour of their Neighbours and Relations, ſo long they remain ſecure of their welfare and lives, for ought that can or will be deſign'd againſt 'em: but where either love never take root, or where it came afterwards to be *perverted to malice and rancour*, well might ſome bitter Fruit be expected from the ſame.

It ſtrait advanced to a *Bloody Conſpiracy*, ver. 19, 20. Two of theſe Brethren, *Simeon* and *Levi*, had once before in another ſad inſtance given a *Specimen of their malice*, Chap. 34. when they plotted and practiſed againſt the *Sechemites* for the Rape on their Siſter *Dinah*. The memory whereof, both in its *cauſe* and *effects*, their Father *Jacob curſed, as well as deſcribed, Chap.* 49. 7. "Curſed (*ſaith he*) be their Anger, for "it was fierce; and their Wrath, for it was cruel.— Where the ſpirits of men are *gall'd* and *canker'd*, they will be *contriving revenge* upon perſons, whether publick or private, as the occaſion is given 'em, or rather taken by them, where we may ſeaſonably take warning to *watch over our ſpirits*, that luſt within us to envy, and boil within us to revenge, that we *nip malice in the very bud*, and prevent it of all its diſmal Effects.

Having conſpired againſt the *life of their Brother*, they broach their venom, by *beginning with his Coat, his Coat of many colours*.——That badge of his Fathers ſpecial affection, and one occaſion of their malice to him——That *Enſign of ſpecial honour*; And who, that robs a man of his *honour*, will ſtick at his *life*? Laſtly, that garment and inſtrument of *warmth*, *health* and *life*. And it is a ſhrewd ſign of an evil deſign againſt the latter, when men ſeize upon the former.

Where

Where let *all here*, that have been tempted, or ſhall hereafter fall into temptation to *Oppreſſion* or *Rapine*, to *Filching* or *Stealing*, but eſpecially to *Robbery* and *Burglary*, let all ſuch for *Contrition*, or *Warning*, ſeriouſly and ſadly conſider the *evil of ſuch Practices*. Such Practices are *wicked in themſelves*, as being manifeſt *violations of the Laws of Righteouſneſs and Juſtice* both Humane and Divine. Such Practices are too evident Indications of hearts void of all *love to mankind, and tenderneſs of humane life:* For how can a man be ſuppoſed to value that life, the means and ſupport whereof he violently and falſly bereaves the owner of? Such Practices full oft do neceſſarily engage to *Murder* and *Bloodſhed*. For it frequently ſo falls out, that, unleſs the Thief add *Murder to his Robbery or Burglary*, he may be like or certain to fall into the power, cuſtody and proſecution of the perſons aſſaulted or attempted: And then muſt the *Knife* or *Dagger*, for the preſervation of the Robber, be ſheathed in the bowels of him that innocently defends himſelf; as certainly as he that *draws his Sword upon his Sovereign*, muſt of neceſſity *throw away the Scabbard*. Now haply this *digreſſion* may be of ſome influence upon the minds of ſome, yet *leſs harden'd Robbers* and *Rebels*; who, though they do not ſo much ſcruple the *Robbery* or *Rebellion for their own ſakes*, may, in ſome meaſure, be deterr'd therefrom, by the dread of *Murder* and *Bloodſhed:* For, doubtleſs, Thouſands would never have begun with *plundering their Countrey-men*, or *reſiſting their Sovereign*, if they had foreſeen, or foreſeared, that their unadviſed Enterprizes would have *terminated in the blood of one and the other*.

But

But to return to the *Cruelty of* Joſeph's *Brethren*. They malign him, they conſpire againſt his Life, and in order to the taking that away, they *caſt him a languiſhing, trembling Priſoner into a deep Pit*, Chap. 37. 24. Impriſonment of it ſelf is ſevere, and yet ſeverer, when the Priſon is a *Pit ſo like a Grave*: And, then moſt dreadful, *when a Grave is known not to be far off*. Debtors and Malefactors may be caſt into Priſon without ſuch terrible apprehenſions as *innocent Perſons*, eſpecially *Sovereigns* (as the *late Royal Martyr too truly obſerved in relation to his own Confinement*.) Debtors are only detained until *payment made*, and Malefactors are to be ſecured in life until the *Gaol-delivery*, when poſſibly the laſt day may prove ſuch to them: But ſuch as with *Joſeph* are altogether unjuſtly and cauſeleſly ſequeſtred from their Liberty, can ſcarce imagine any other end of their Gaolers, than that they only *reſerve 'em for a ſpeedy, violent death*. Under the horrible apprehenſions of ſuch a Period had *Joſeph*'s Brethren in their Cruelty put him.

Nay, when by the *melting Rhetorick of their Brother* Judah, they were reſtrain'd from his *actual Murder*, yet ſo far did they perſevere in their unnatural *thirſt of Revenge*, as to ſell him for a *wretched Bond-ſlave* (a Condition worſe than that of the dead) to the *cruel and curſt* Iſhmaelites, *Chap.* 37. 26, 27, 28. I call the *Iſhmaelites cruel and curſt*, as not degenerating ('tis like) from that hopeful Father of theirs, *whoſe hand was againſt every man, and againſt whom was every man's hand*, Gen. 16. 12. Now in this barbarous *Caravan* of *Iſhmaelites*, might they behold their little tender Brother begin to look in anguiſh back upon them his inhumane Huckſters. Now might they behold

 him

him to take unwilling weary steps towards he knew not *where*, nor *what*. If he prov'd unwilling to march, they might haply see him *dragg'd along forcibly at a Horses tail*; or, if he were by the Buyers thought unable, all the favour he was like to gain, was to be rudely *packt upon a Camel's back*. Well, by this time he's *out of their sight*: But he and his distress will not be always *out of their mind*, as will appear by the Sequel, as we now proceed to speak.

II. Of the *Deportment of these cruel men under their Guilt.*

Where it is *remarkable*,
1. That they *call it to mind.*
2. That they *confess it.*
3. That they *aggravate it.*
4. That they *take the present distress as the punishment of it.*

1. They *call their Guilt to mind.*

The apprehension of their Guilt, recovers a real existence in their Souls.

Can we imagine, that such an unnatural course as this should be taken against *an innocent Brother?* That they should first *conspire his Death*, and afterwards so far *expose his Life to extreme danger*, and forthwith for all this while, *Thirteen Years, as some reckon*, or *Twenty two Years, as others collect*, forthwith and for so long time (I say) suppress or extinguish *all memory and sense of such a staring, crying Sin?* We may rather, from what befel the *condemned Criminal in this Congre-*

gation,

gation, as she hath *declared*, conclude that such manifest Cruelty must be followed with *Fear and Horror*. If upon her *consenting to some revengeful practice by her late Husband against another innocent man*, though she understood not *expresly* that his Murder was intended, she could not free her mind from dreadful impressions *waking nor sleeping*; we may strongly conclude that *Joseph's Brethren*, who had after plotting his Death, sold him to *more than probable destruction*, were visited with frequent *stinging memento's* of what so wickedly they performed.

However we are by the Text assured, that (when in their distress) they recovered a lively *remembrance*, and entertain'd a deep *sense* of the same.

Such a remembrance may be presumed to occur to the Guilty, as from the ordinary operations of the Soul's known Faculties, of *Understanding*, *Judgment*, *Imagination*, and *Remembrance*; so likewise from divers *semblable occurrences in humane affairs*, sundry remarkable *acts of God's providence*, and above all from an *unexplicable secret Nemese*, or a kind of *severe Divine Instinct*, that ever and anon hunts and pursues the Conscience of the Guilty. By such kind of secret stinging remembrances of their Cruelty, hath the *Peace* of some been utterly banished, the *health* of others miserably impaired, the hands of some drawn down in intolerable anguish *upon themselves*, and the tongues of others enforced *openly to reveal* the insupportable burdens of their own spirits for experimenting this last Essay, whether the *giving vent might save the vessel that would otherways break*.

So full of Torture is a *Conscience guilty of Cruelty or Bloodshed*, that no man in his right wits, as ever he

hopes for peace and quiet, would truſt his own Soul with ſo *fatal a ſecret.*

2. Remembring their Guilt, they *confeſs it.* They ſay *One to another*, we are *verily Guilty.*

They do not (with *one that ought in time to take it into ſerious conſideration*) firſt *intimate a foul practice*, and ſpeak a *conſent to it*, and acknowledge *frightful impreſſions of it*, and then go about to *deny or extenuate the matter.*

They cry *Guilty*, and *Verily Guilty.*

They cry *One and All.*

Each accuſes *himſelf*, and every one impeaches *all the reſt*, ſaying in [*We are verily Guilty*] I am ſo for *my ſelf*, and every one of you for *his ſelf.*

They ſtifle not their Guilt *in whole or in part.*

They ſtick not at any general or particular *Covenant*, *Vow*, or *Oath*, whereby they might look upon themſelves obliged to *mutual Secrecy.*

They inſiſt not upon their *Credit*, neither the Credit of *any one ſingly* though never ſo Religious a man, nor the Credit of *All put together*; though as ſuch, they made up the *then onely Godly Party in the world.*

Nor indeed would any Criminal elſe, that is in the leaſt truly *ſenſible of Guilt*, and *ſorrowful for it*, do otherwiſe, eſpecially when *under ſentence of Death for it.*

As for the open and free Confeſſion of their own *perſonal Guilt*, it is an *eſſential Branch of Repentance and Satisfaction.* Hereby *Honour is given to God*, *Right is done to Humane Juſtice*, and the *Perſons injured*

jured have the well-meant ſatisfaction of an *ingenuous ſubmiſſion*; which, when it is *all that is within the power of the Delinquent*, will be accepted in lieu of adequate compenſation.

As for the diſcovery of *Confederates* and *Conſpirators*, (although ſome have *ſo far apoſtatized from all truth and fidelity, as not to love Life at ſuch a rate*) yet any one that writes himſelf *Chriſtian*, (one would think) ſhould be of *another mind*, when he conſiders, how by concealment he *ſecures* and *hardens the Guilty*; by Confeſſion he expoſes 'em (as far as he can) to *Judgment*, *Shame*, and *Sorrow*. By Confeſſion he *warns the innocent againſt wicked attempts*; by Concealment he leaves them *in their Enemies power*, and *draws their blood upon his own head, even after his death*. By Concealment he draws or leaves the *Guiltleſs under ſuſpicion*; by Confeſſion he ſets the *Saddle on the right Horſe*. By Concealment *upon Oath*, either ye make God to become a *Party againſt himſelf*, or ye give the *Devil a power of binding to Secrecy, beyond what ye allow to God of looſing to Confeſſion*; whereas by Confeſſion ye give *honour and pre eminence to God*, and do effectually and actually break all the *diabolical Bonds of wicked Conſpiracies and Aſſociations*.

I hope what hath been thus briefly ſpoken touching the *free Confeſſion of* Joſeph's *Brethren*, with the *grounds of all free Confeſſions*, may ſerve to open the eyes of all to the ſeeing of the truth, and the mouth of the Guilty to the putting of the truth in practice.

3. Con-

3. Confeſſing their Guilt, they *aggravate it.*

They now conſider *Joſeph* not only as a *man*, but as *their own dear Brother*, which reaches as far as *Judah's words*, Chap. 37. 27. when he diſſwaded them from taking away his Life. He is *our Brother*, and *our Fleſh*. This includes the wronging of a man, yea, of *an innocent* or *good man*, and adds an aggravation from his *near Relation.*

They aggravate their Guilt from *their Inexorableneſs.* They heard him (they ſay) *beſeeching, entreating, begging*, and *wooing for mercy*; and their Deafneſs, their Obſtinacy, and their *Obdurateneſs to all ſuch powerful language*, is now an aggravation of Guilt and Grief to 'em.

And yet there was a more melting language which now they well remember, *Joſeph* their dear Brother uſed, than that of the *Tongue.*

It was that of the *Anguiſh of his Soul*, which their curſt Barbarity ſtruck him into. It was that language of *Sighs and Groans, and Shrieks, and Tears, and convulſive Diſtortions, and languiſhing Airs, and more than dying Looks*, which now afreſh concentred in their imaginations, and made up an *imaginary Ghoſt of their near dying, departing Brother.* All the Terror of *Joſeph's* Majeſty, as an *Auguſt Prince*, whil'ſt unknown to 'em, did not ſo terrifie 'em with the threats of *Impriſonment*, until they proved themſelves no Spies, or with *Death*, if they could not purge themſelves therefrom, as now the revival of all *his Souls anguiſh*, when he, to the life, acted the part of a ſweet, innocent, importunate, almoſt for grief-expiring Child, did then ſo natu-

naturally perform. [*Limus ut hic durescit, & hæc ut cera liquescit uno eodemque igni!*] Their alienated hearts did not then more *like mud* grow hard, than now *like wax*, they melted and flowed before the same Fire of their little Brother *Joseph*'s Soul in the utmost torment of anguish, as once they *saw* it, and now they *remember* it.

Nay, yet they have not finished the Exaggeration of their Crime.

They, amongst 'em, make their Crime *Murder*, *no less than Murder.*

At least *Reuben*, who understood how far they had all conspired to kill *Joseph*; how far at *Judah*'s more tender motion all the rest had consented to the *selling of him*; and how far himself had *concealed all these wicked purposes and practices*, I say *Reuben* imputes no less than his *blood to them*, ver. 22. "Therefore be-"hold also his blood is required.

It may not be impertinent here to look more nearly into this their imputation of *Joseph*'s *Blood to themselves.*

Let us for a while consider, what they *might have said for themselves*, and yet *what they said of themselves.*

They might have said *for themselves* such things (as *our Criminal* would be glad and forward to say for her self) *namely*——

We, observing our old weak Father totally to alienate his Love from all *us elder Children*, or, at least, strangely to neglect us in comparison with *this Novice of a later Venter*, upon which he grew very insolent and imperious, and contrary to the course of Nature, and right of Primogeniture, to *dream forsooth of a*

tyran-

tyrannical Empire over us his Seniors and Superiors, did begin to think to take him down in his Childrens ſhoes. One of us indeed in haſte cry'd, *Let us kill him*; and 'tis true we too many of us through ſurprize cry'd, *Do what ye will with him:* But, no ſooner did our more diſcreet Brother *Judah* eſſay to allay our Paſſions, ſuddenly moved againſt *our Brother and Fleſh*, as he truly ſtiled him, but we were *all contented*, Chap. 37. v. 27. very well contented at his milder motion to have him only *ſold to our near Kinſmen*, the direct Deſcendants of our ever honoured great Grandfather *Abraham*: And who knows, but if he had then put the Queſtion, touching his *full liberty*, we might have been as well content with *that too.*——But, after all, they ſcorn to *palliate or extenuate any branch or circumſtance of their hideous Crime*; they plead *Guilty*, and *Reuben tells them*, they are guilty not only of the *Treſpaſs*, but of the *Murder*.

Judah might have alledged his own natural affection, his *tenderneſs of* Joſeph's *blood*, and his ſucceſs in *ſaving of his life*, although with the price of his *liberty*. But when all the reſt plead Guilty, *he alſo holds up his hand*, or at leaſt *holds his tongue*, as ſurely thinking, that the *adviſing the ſelling of him, was next door to the ſlaying of him*.

But what might *Reuben* have ſaid, not only *in excuſe*, but even in *commendation of himſelf*? And that *to this tune*.

Chap. 37. 21, 22. When I diſcerned my Brethrens *bloody purpoſes* againſt my Brother *Joſeph*, I deliver'd him actually out of their hands; and diverting them from killing of him, I contrived the *putting of him into a Pit*, that thence I might in ſeaſon have taken him, and

and delivered him to his Father again, without any selling of him into slavery and danger.

Ver. 29, 30. When I returned to the Pit for the *delivering of him*, and found him not, *I rent my cloaths, and bitterly lamented my misfortune and his*, and grew almost distracted at the missing of him.

Chap. 42. 22. And now *this distress* is come upon us, and the wickedness of that our *unnatural sin* is thereby afresh brought to our remembrance; although I do tell you, that I *abhorr'd and declar'd against such sin*; yet I do not take upon me to exempt my self from *all guilt*. I do conclude *his Blood is required:* you must needs acknowledge *your selves guilty of it*, because of the *murderous conspiracy and cruel practice*. Nor do I say but *my concealing* of the whole from my Father to the indemnifying of you, may justly occasion share of his Blood to be required of *me amongst the rest of you*.

Thus they all carry their Cruelty to the utmost height of *Murder*, the Murder of a Person, whom *they knew not to be dead or alive:* whereas *alive he was*, and even stood within their sight and hearing, *a living and glorious man*, and that by occasion of their Practices, as *Joseph himself acknowledged in* Chap. 45. 5.

After all that hath been said upon the aggravation of this Misdemeanor, we may clearly discern, that, however *senseless* evil men may be (and the *less sensible* they are, the *worse* may they be judged to be) of any actions amounting to Murder; such good men (as in the main we may hope *Joseph's Brethren* to have been) are apt to be overwhelmed with apprehensions of such their attempts as but *border upon Bloodshed*. They not

only abominate *wallowing in gore*, but dread alſo *garments even ſpotted with blood.*

But *groſs Murder it ſelf* is not ſo utterly unpractiſed amongſt us, that at this time we need to inſiſt upon its *Circumſtantials*, or the *Tendencies thereto.* How frequently doth there cry aloud in our ears, *The Blood of Innocents ſhed by their unnatural Mothers at their birth*, the Blood of honeſt men ſhed upon the *Road*, or in their *Bed* by *Robbers and Burglarers?* Not to mention the leſs precious Blood of *Ruffians ſhed in Taverns*, or of *Hectors ſhed in Duels.* Sometimes we hear of deſperate Sinners ſhedding *their own blood with their own hands.* At this time we are given to ſuſpect that the *Blood of a Lover hath been ſhed by his Rival*, and *conſented to by his unconſtant and treacherous Miſtriſs.* However, this we are ſure of, that we have here in view a *wretched woman ſentenced to death for hating her own Fleſh, and poyſoning her ſo lately married Huſband:* Nor doth the horror of the Fact as yet oblige her (ſo far as we can *yet diſcern*) either to the *free confeſſing of her Murder before men*, or to the duely *aggravating of it to her ſelf.*

She too tenderly huggs her ſin in her own boſom. She will not take the counſel given by *Joſhua* to *Achan*, *Joſh.* 7. 19. as *Achan* did, *ver.* 20. She will not freely and truly declare the whole of her Guilt. She doth not (as ſhe ought) *give Glory to God, by confeſſing to him, and telling of it to his ſervants.*

What do you apprehend *of your ſelf* and your ſad condition? Can *you* form right Notions of the *Nature of Murder?* Can you by your ſelf ſufficiently aggravate the Crime from your *deſtroying your Husband's Body*, and alſo (as 'tis to be fear'd) his *very Soul?*

Can

Can you aggravate your Sin from your *Treachery*, who when he *asked Food*, did with ſemblance of Love, give him as bad as a *Serpent or a Scorpion?* Can you enhance your Guilt, by conſidering how you have murder'd a *Man made in the likeneſs of God*; and how you have murder'd a *Husband ſet over you as your Soveraign Head?* Whereupon the wiſdom of our *Law-givers* hath made ſuch Murder no leſs than *Treaſon.*

They have alſo ordained a *puniſhment for it no leſs terrible*, than its Name is odious: even that of *burning alive to aſhes*; which may be probably ſuppos'd to intend amongſt other, theſe two formidable Repreſentations, the one of *Hell Torment*, the other of *everlaſting Oblivion.*

Yet further; Can you, during your ſilence and obſtinacy, counſel your ſelf in all the methods of an *effectual Repentance*, and *ſaving Faith?* Can you aſſure your ſelf of the prevalence of *your own Prayers*, (if you pray at all) or can you hope for the effectual fervent *Prayers of the Righteous*, who can diſcover in you no ſuch Contrition, as may move 'em to Compaſſion? Can a Soul, ſo preſs'd down as yours ought to be, raiſe it ſelf up, unleſs by *deep Humiliation*, and *free Confeſſion*, you obtain *comfortable Abſolution?*

When *Joſeph*'s guilty Brethren came to know that they ſtood before him, they could not anſwer him, for they were *troubled* and *terrified at his preſence.* And are you able (if you know you ſtand in a *more dreadful preſence*, even that of *God himſelf*) can you be able to think, or ſpeak, or do any thing of a free and noble nature, that may at all *recommend you to mercy?* I rather ſuſpect, that *ſuch a cloſe, ſullen, trayterous Murderer*, muſt through her dark thoughts be *rackt with*

torture, be bound in all her Faculties, and be drown'd in Deſpair and Perdition.

Conſider then *in time*, (if it be not already paſt) whether it be not more adviſeable to make an *ingenuous diſcovery of the whole of your Guilt*, than at laſt, when it is too late, to have it *wrung out with the Halter*, or *extracted by the Fire*. Let not then your wickedneſs be *ſweet in your mouth*, neither *hide it under your tongue*, Job 20. 12. *Acknowledge your tranſgreſſion*, and *let your ſin be ever before you*; according to the *language and practice of penitent* David, *when involved in the guilt of blood*, Pſal. 51. 3. Yea, take your puniſhment meekly, as *juſtly inflicted upon you both by God and man for your heinous ſin*; which leads me to the *laſt Particular of their Deportment*.

4. Having Remembred, Confeſſed, and Aggravated their Sin, they *take their preſent Diſtreſs to be as a puniſhment inflicted upon them for it*.

> *Therefore is this Diſtreſs come upon us*, ſay they *all*.
> *Therefore behold alſo his blood is required*, ſaith *Reuben*.

Theſe men had been from their Infancy educated in the *Knowledge and Fear of the True God*, who made and Governs, and Judges the World in Righteouſneſs. And however their *Envy* againſt their Brother *Joſeph*, might for a ſeaſon blind 'em, to the permitting of 'em to do ſo foul a deed: And however their *Proſperity* might of a long time infatuate 'em, to the ſtupifying of their hearts to the Recognition or Senſe of the ſame; yet they not having abjur'd or forgotten their God, nor having utterly ſtifled their Conſciences, nor having abſolutely eraſed paſt facts out of their memories; but being now caſt into ſudden adverſity, which makes

makes men to *consider*, they begin pensively to cast about for the *Cause of their present Woe*. Distress they sensibly feel: *A Cause thereof they must suppose*; for they were not of the number of those, that imagine any thing comes by a mere *blind chance*. They knew their affliction *arose not out of the dust*, nor was blown upon them by any of the winds: Nor did they blame the *Stars* for it: They understood that *God orders all the affairs of men, both for weal and woe*: They knew that he doth *not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men, to crush under his feet all the Prisoners of the Earth*. They weighed that *Sin is the only Mother of Misery*, and that therefore they must certainly have *sinned against their Maker and Judge*; and that the grievousest of all their Sins must be put to this account. They might judge that no sin cryes so loud in the ears of God for Vengeance, as that of *Blood and Cruelty*; nor any murder so effectually, as that of *our Brethren, our own Flesh and Blood*.

They could not then but remember, what they had *long before contriv'd and executed against their dear Brother* Joseph. In the severe Treatment they now met withal, being threatned as Spies, obliged to fetch their tender Brother *Benjamin*, to the grief of their Aged Father *Jacob*, and the danger of his Life; and being in danger all, or some of 'em, of being made close Prisoners, or of being cast into the *Dungeon*, as they cast their Brother *Joseph* into the Pit, they see much of their *former Crime* in their *present Distress*; the one proving (as ordinarily it doth) a *mirror* of the other. No wonder then, they feeling the instant and urgent calamity, and recollecting their ancient provocation, and considering the *Justice of an incensed God*,

should

ſhould in horror and anguiſh, believe and acknowledg themſelves to be *verily guilty concerning their Brother*; and that *Diſtreſs, as a puniſhment, was come upon them*, and that *his Blood was required*.

Thus have I (as many *Avocations and Interruptions* would give me a little time to collect them) given you my *ſudden, but ſerious Reflections upon this ſorrowful Song of* Joſeph's *Brethren*; with ſome accommodation thereof to the *preſent ſad occaſion*. Before I conclude, give me leave a little to exemplifie the uſefulneſs of this remarkable paſſage, in the *following deductions*.

1. We may hence learn, to *admire the inſcrutable Revolutions of Divine Providence*. *Paris*, *Romulus*, and *Cyrus*, having been expoſed to extremities (as is ſtoried, though without any great certainty) and afterwards mounting to the height of Power, are ſtill ſpoken of as *almoſt miracles*: But here we read *a Narrative of* Joſeph, *much more true and no leſs ſtrange*. In his tender years, he hardly eſcapes out of the violent hands of his bloody-minded Brethren into a calamitous and deſperate *Captivity*: He was ſold and bought, and bought and ſold over and over: He is caſt into *Pit and Priſon*, in Perils always, in Deaths often. And after all, his Brethren, by a *wonderful turn of Providence*, are brought low, when he is exalted: They ſeek to him whom they had ſold, and *bow to him in the midſt of all his Glory*, whom they had trampled upon in the depth of his miſery. They behold him advanced by God himſelf, to be a *Foſter-Father to a Great King*, *a Patron of a vaſt People*, and as able as willing, to be a *Preſerver of their Father and themſelves*. By this ſecret Intrigue of Gods Wiſdom, the *holy Seed of Iſrael* is ſecur'd from Famiſhing, and the ſacred Stock is

continued,

continued, from which was to ſpring the *Meſſiah*, the Glorious Saviour of Mankind. Thus we ſee the moſt ſlight and unpromiſing circumſtances of humane affairs, capable of being ordered by God to the *moſt important and Noble Purpoſes.* Nor are there any wheels in this vaſt Machine of the World, how croſs ſoever they move to one another, that God cannot, doth not over-rule and harmonize to the producing moſt admirable effects, as ('tis more than probable) we ſhall be clearly given to comprehend at the *Conſummation of all things.* I cannot now ſtand to infer, how this ſhould quiet and eſtabliſh our fluctuating hearts, in the midſt of all *croſs-grain'd occurrences*, and ſeemingly *unequal adminiſtrations* of worldly concerns.

2. Since we read how *Joſeph*'s Brethren were thus over-reached and over-ruled, to the recalling to mind within themſelves their Violence intended, and in part committed againſt their Brother, to the *confeſſing of it to one another in the hearing of that Brother himſelf*, who had then full power for the avenging of it upon their heads, and to the ſeeing themſelves, with all confuſion of face, made, by way of juſt puniſhment for it, *Priſoners*, and further obnoxious to deſtruction: Since we read all this brought to paſs by the *ſecret Providence of an All-ſeeing God*; who, henceforward, whilſt he knows and thinks of the whole, will dare to offer any violence to his Brother, though in the *ſecreteſt Receſs, or darkeſt Night?* If I ſay, *Surely the darkneſs ſhall cover me*; even *the night ſhall be light about me*; *yea the darkneſs hideth not from thee, but the night ſhineth as the day*; *the darkneſs and the light are both alike to thee*; *Pſal.* 139. 11, 12. We can no more evade *Gods Wiſdom*, when he hath a mind to detect us, than we can

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obſtruct *his power*, when he arms himſelf to puniſh us.

There is no *ſecurity in the commiſſion of any ſin.* "God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with eve-"ry ſecret thing, *Eccl.* 12. 14. There is nothing hid, "which ſhall not be manifeſted, *Mar.* 4. 22.

But then there are *ſome Sins*, that God makes himſelf more peculiarly concerned to detect, ſuch as *High-Treaſon againſt his own Vicegerents.* And therefore we are upon *that very Conſideration* warn'd againſt the *cloſeſt entertaining ſo much as a thought of the ſame.* "Curſe not the King, no not in thy thought, and curſe "not the Rich in thy Bed chamber: for a Bird of the "air ſhall carry the voice, and that which hath wings "ſhall tell the matter, *Eccl.* 10. 20.

God is likewiſe very *rigorous in the Scrutiny he makes after any bloody Crimes:* As if he would upon occaſion *take the Coroner's Inqueſt into his own hand*, he himſelf is ſaid to *make inquiſition for blood*, Pſal. 9. 12. When *Ahab* had ſo wickedly murder'd *Naboth*, God commiſſions *Elijah* both as a *Searcher*, and a *Judge*; firſt to *hunt him out*, and then to *doom him to his deſerved puniſhment*, 1 Kings 21. 17, 24. It is long ſince that it paſt into a Proverb [*Murder will out.*] And ſuch a *Vox Populi* being founded upon obſervation of the uſual effects of Providence in the caſes of blood, may in a ſober ſence paſs for *Vox Dei.* Man firſt ſaith it, and *God himſelf by his frequent wonderful Diſcoveries hath ſet his Seal to it.* It would be endleſs, it is really impoſſible to reckon up or ſearch out the myſterious methods of the Almighty practiſed or practicable in this Proceſs. We may from conſideration had in groſs of ſuch his Arts at the *riſing of every furious paſſion*, at the

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ſtirring of any revengeful inclination, at the *offer of any cruel and bloody temptation*, take warning to ſtand upon our Guard, and to quell the very firſt of all mutinous and boiſterous motions.

3. How deeply doth it concern every Creature to *examine himſelf to the bottom touching all crying Sins*, particularly touching the Sins of *Cruelty* and *Blood?* Divers men may heretofore have incurr'd more or leſs guilt of this nature, which becauſe Providence for a while lets to *ſleep*, Conſcience is content to *bury as dead*. They wipe their bloody mouths, wherewith they have ſuckt the blood of their Brethren, and cry, *Am I not innocent?* They are as ready for a *new attempt*, as ever they were for the old performance: *Becauſe ſentence againſt their former evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore their heart is fully ſet in them to do evil*, Eccl. 8. 11. But let all ſuch remember the *bloody Agag*, who, after he had dreamt that the *bitterneſs of his death was paſt*, came *delicately unto* Samuel *the Lords Inquiſitor for blood:* who, for that *Agag*'s *Sword had made women childleſs*, made *his mother childleſs among women, by hewing of him in pieces before the Lord*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 32, 33.

In ſuch an *almoſt deſperate Caſe* as this of Blood is, Let a man take his meaſures for averting the Shame, Horror, Confuſion and Deſtruction that are due to him at the *hand of the Lord*, from the behaviour of ſuch as diſcreetly endeavour to reconcile themſelves to the *offended juſtice of man, to their Soveraign*. Let him go with a *Rope about his Neck in all true humiliation, with all frank Confeſſion*. Fearing and trembling, let him proſtrate himſelf, entreating the onely begotten Son of his God the King of *Iſrael* to offer his own

blood once shed, even for the *shedders of his own blood*, as well as for the rest of Mankind. Who knoweth but thereupon the Divine Sovereign may have mercy *here* and *hereafter:* For God is *King of the Kings of Israel*, and the Kings of *Israel* were wont to be *merciful Kings.*

4. Let us all exercise the *utmost Compassion towards these perishing wretches*; what, though as yet they do not *think us kind*, because we urge them to what is *grievous to flesh and blood*, but profitable to the Spirit, even *voluntary and ample Confession?* What, though they do not rightly *pity themselves?* What, though they cannot or will not (as they ought) *pray for themselves?* yet in pitious consideration, that the end of their Journey is *Eternity*, the way to their Bliss is long, the passage thereto strait, their success very *dubious*, but not absolutely desperate; Let us, according to our Opportunities and Abilities, whil'st we and they breath together, with strong Cries never cease assailing the Throne of Grace on their behalf for such measures of, *Clear Conviction*, *Thorough Contrition*, *Deep Humiliation*, *Free Confession*, and *Living Faith*, as may carry them through the Agonies of Death to a Crown of Life, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

FINIS.